

EXHIBIT E

Israel-Hamas war**Ben & Jerry's calls for permanent ceasefire in Gaza**

Stance by ice cream maker's board risks reigniting tensions with parent company Unilever



Ben & Jerry's is one of only a few companies to have taken a public stance on the Israel-Hamas war or to have backed a permanent ceasefire © Bloomberg

Madeleine Speed JANUARY 16 2024



Ben & Jerry's board has called for a permanent ceasefire in Gaza, in a move that risks reigniting tensions with parent company Unilever over the ice cream maker's stance on Israeli policies.

"Peace is a core value of [Ben & Jerry's](#)," the company's board chair Anuradha Mittal told the Financial Times. "From Iraq to Ukraine [the company] has consistently stood up for these principles. Today is no different as we call for peace and a permanent and immediate ceasefire."

The decision follows a long-running dispute between the board of Ben & Jerry's and Unilever over the ice cream brand's attempt in 2021 to stop selling its products in occupied Palestinian territories.

To prevent the move, Unilever sold the Israeli arm of the brand to a local licensee. Ben & Jerry's responded by filing a lawsuit against Unilever, in a rare case of a company being [sued by its own subsidiary](#).

Unilever, which also owns brands from Dove soap and Cif cleaning products to Magnum ice creams and Marmite, said in December 2022 that the [lawsuit had been resolved](#). The Israeli business is now owned by local licensee Avi Zinger.

After consulting with Ben & Jerry's management and stakeholders, Mittal said the board was confident its stance on a ceasefire was "consistent with the history and values of our company".

The independence of Ben & Jerry's board was enshrined when Unilever acquired the company in 2000.

[Israel declared war on Hamas](#) after its militants stormed into the country on October 7, killing 1,200 people and taking a further 240 hostage, according to Israeli officials. Israel's retaliatory bombardment of Gaza has killed more than 24,000 people, according to Palestinian officials, as well as displacing 1.9mn of the enclave's 2.3mn inhabitants, and rendering much of the territory uninhabitable.

Ben & Jerry's is one of only a few companies to have taken a public stance on the Israel-Hamas war or to have backed a permanent ceasefire. Several companies that have commented publicly have faced consumer backlashes.

"It is stunning that millions are marching around the world but the corporate world has been silent," said Mittal of the response to the conflict.

Starbucks has been targeted with a boycott of its coffee shops after a union representing some of its employees, Starbucks Workers United, posted "Solidarity with Palestine!" on social media platform X last October.

The chain's chief executive Laxman Narasimhan wrote a letter to staff in December in which he said protesters had been "influenced by misrepresentation on social media of what we stand for".

Unilever board member and activist investor Nelson Peltz stepped down last month as chair of Jewish human rights organisation the Simon Wiesenthal Center after it called for a boycott of Ben & Jerry's, which it previously [branded 'antisemitic'](#) over its attempt to cease sales in the occupied West Bank.

The board of Ben & Jerry's said it had made its decision to call for a ceasefire independently of Unilever, pointing out that it is an autonomous subsidiary of the consumer goods conglomerate and that the ice cream brand's board held "primary responsibility for its social mission and essential brand integrity".

Unilever did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Additional reporting by James Shotter in Jerusalem

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